

I. Plan Purpose and Process

The North Downtown neighborhoods (South Lake Union, Denny Triangle, and Belltown) are undergoing dramatic changes and quickly becoming dynamic communities. Revisions to the City's Comprehensive Plan will be made in 2004, and changes to the Land Use Code are under consideration that will increase height limits in the Denny Triangle area and encourage housing density in the North Downtown neighborhoods. New housing and redevelopment projects will amount to over 20,000 housing units and even more new jobs over the next twenty years.

While the new South Lake Union Park provides generous parkland acreage at the northern edge of the South Lake Union neighborhood, there is a need for additional open space in North Downtown. Current park resources to support the projected housing and job increases are limited.

Project consultants and Parks staff have compiled City and private sector information on development trends for the area. Interviews and information gathering have taken place with City departments, property owners, and neighborhood representatives.

The project goal is to develop a plan, based on an examination of existing and proposed development in the North Downtown neighborhoods, that identifies the types and general locations for a system of parks, open space, and recreation facilities that meets the growing needs of the city. The plan's implementation measures include recommendations for acquisition, public-private partnerships, creative land use controls, and the possible redevelopment of public right-of-way to realize the recommended open spaces.

Seattle Parks & Recreation provided funding, project management, and staffing for the project, with MAKERS being hired as the urban design consultant firm. Given the breadth and scope of work being done in this area, City departments provided technical review assistance with analysis compilation.

A Plan Oversight Committee (POC) comprised of key department heads from Seattle Parks & Recreation, Department of Transportation, Department of Planning and Development, and Office of Planning and Management provided a sounding board for the project's development and direction. Two working sessions were held with key stakeholders, community groups, and City department representatives to review the analysis and recommendations. Parks staff will present the plan to the Mayor's Growth Management Committee, the Seattle Planning Commission, and the Seattle Park Board for review. A broad-scale South Lake Union Open House is planned for early summer 2004 where the North Downtown Park Plan will be showcased along with other City projects.

It is our intention that this plan will be used as a comprehensive strategy for the City and private development to provide the level of open space for our city's growth and to create the kinds of living and working environments that will allow this area to thrive.